



BSSEC

resources

Promoting Your Enterprise - a resource pack

Part 4 - Creating leaflets and brochures

Whether you're producing a simple in-house leaflet or commissioning a design agency to create a major new brochure for the organisation, the following tips and suggestions will help you get the most out of whatever you produce.

Getting the basics right

Before embarking on the production of a leaflet or brochure, there are some basics that will influence all of the later decisions you make. In terms of planning your promotional material, this is the starting point.

■ **Budget** - The time and money you have available to spend on producing a leaflet or brochure will influence all of the other decisions you make, so work this out first - even if it's just a 'ballpark' figure.

■ **Distribution** - Think about how you intend to use the material - including how you intend to distribute it. If you decide that you need a printed leaflet, then sorting out distribution is vital. Will you post the leaflet to potential customers? Include it as an insert in a newspaper or newsletter? Pay a company to distribute it door-to-door in a specific area? Send it out to telephone or website enquirers? All of these options will have an impact on the quantity you need and the distribution cost.

You may also require a digital version for email distribution - indeed, you may decide that this will be your main means of distribution. If so, you will need to ensure that the digital file is not too large (say, under 1Mb), and that it can be read easily on-screen and also printed off. Big files containing lots of photographs and graphics may look superb but if they take too long to display on-screen or require complex printing then the recipient will very likely just delete them! (You may also run the risk of breaching e-marketing regulations. Useful information on this can be found in the 'Online Marketing and E-commerce' section of Business Link's site at www.businesslink.org.)

■ **Production timetable** - Planning the distribution will also help in planning your production timetable. For example, if you want to distribute the leaflets at a specific event then you need to schedule completion of the material accordingly. Similarly, if your leaflet is to appear as an insert in a newspaper or other organisations' newsletter mailings, production needs to be co-ordinated with these other publication dates.

"Think about how you intend to use the material - including how you intend to distribute it"

Promoting Your Enterprise - a resource pack has been produced by Birmingham & Solihull Social Economy Consortium (BSSEC) - a practitioner-led network that supports and promotes the social enterprise sector.

The pack provides guidance and information for social enterprises to help them improve the effectiveness of their promotional activities. It comprises:

Part 1 - Getting Started

Part 2 - Defining Your Market

Part 3 - Writing press releases

Part 4 - Creating leaflets and brochures

Part 5 - Producing a newsletter

Part 6 - Building a basic website

The pack can be downloaded, free of charge, at www.bssec.org.uk

BSSEC contacts

General enquiries

Alun Severn
BSSEC Secretariat
Tel: 0121 233 0278
alun@bssec.org.uk

Media enquiries

Sarah Louise Taylor
Alpha Communication
Tel: 0191 375 0101
sarah@alpha.coop

See the test version of our Purchasing Guide to Social Enterprise & the Voluntary Sector in Birmingham & Solihull at www.bssec.org.uk

■ **Production** - Will you be producing the leaflet in-house, or commissioning a design agency? The latter option will be more costly but it will save time and result in a more professional product. Whichever you choose, make sure a member of your team has responsibility for overseeing the project - management and co-ordination, liaising with designers and distributors, and ensuring that the material produced is on time and within budget.

■ **Purpose** - Be clear about the purpose of your promotional material - whether it's to sell, inform, attract investment or all three - and make sure the purpose is reflected in the design and content.

■ **Shelf-life** - How long will you be using the promotional material for? A comprehensive new organisational brochure that covers all aspects of your business and its services is a significant expense and needs to be useable for a much longer period than, say, a simple sales flyer. While you may, quite rightly, want to produce promotional literature that capitalises on a specific event, news story or achievement, think carefully about the information you do include and ensure that your content stays 'fresh' for as long as you need to use it.

Creating content

Although you may not be a copywriter, you and your staff team will have a much greater understanding of your business than any external agency can and your input into the content of the leaflet or brochure is absolutely vital - whether you're writing it from scratch or proofing the work of a designer or marketing agency.

"Think carefully about the information you do include and ensure that your content stays 'fresh' for as long as you need to use it"

Here are some key points to keep in mind:

■ **Start with the basics** - The starting point for any text is to identify the key information it absolutely must contain and use that as a basis for its content - this information could be your contact phone number, the name of your enterprise, what it does, how its services can be accessed, why people should use your enterprise, etc.

■ **Write for your market** - As with all promotional material, you need to understand the audience your leaflet or brochure is aimed at and write accordingly. See Part 2 of Promoting Your Enterprise (Defining Your Market) for further guidance.

■ **Reflect your ethos** - Try to use language that reflects the nature of your enterprise and what it provides. The language you use - formal and business-like, for example, or more casual and fun - plays a huge part in how people think about you and your business. For example, the following sentences are essentially saying the same thing, just in different ways:

'Yellowpops Childcare delivers a wide range of exceptional services in its field and has an extensive client base in the local area.'

'Yellowpops Childcare is popular with local parents because it provides quality, flexible childcare and offers heaps of fun-packed activities for kids.'

Neither sentence is incorrect, but the latter uses shorter, punchier words to emphasise what distinguishes the service - friendliness, flexibility and approachability - and the qualities customers may consider most important in choosing childcare provision.

■ **Be consistent** - Avoid confusing readers by using multiple terms for the same thing. For example:

'Yellowpops Childcare was established in 1989 by three friends in Birmingham. Since then, YP has increased its annual turnover to over £1million, making Yellowpops one of the biggest childcare enterprises in the city.'

Also, be consistent in the way you treat words - for example if you capitalise the job title Chief Executive, then capitalise all other job titles too.

■ **Be concise** - Nobody will spend as much time reading your leaflet or brochure as you will, so be sure to get the main messages across quickly. Be clear and concise and don't elaborate content for the sake of filling space. Promotional leaflets and brochures are one of those areas where less can definitely be more! Your leaflet or brochure should also be grammatically correct, of course, and free of errors and typographical mistakes. This is an essential part of presenting a strong, professional image.

Design and layout

While it is vital that your leaflet or brochure is clear, concise and well-written, layout and design also play a huge part in determining how 'readable' it is. Readers are usually encouraged by visual 'cues' such as pictures, 'pull quotes' - small extracts of text 'pulled and quoted' in larger typeface as a graphic emphasis - and headings and sub-headings that serve to create visual appeal and help the reader 'navigate' through large bodies of text.

The following tips will get you started:

■ **Reflect your identity** - If your enterprise has a recognisable logo, use this as the basis of your design in terms of colour and shapes. For example, a company with a yellow and green circular logo could use those colours as principal shades for titles and information boxes and use circular photos.

■ **Be inspired** - Look at the literature of other enterprises in your sector to get some idea of what you feel works well and what doesn't. Of course, don't create carbon copies of existing designs, but you don't need to re-invent the wheel either. Also, if you're commissioning a design agency, pass on any literature that you like the look of to give them some guidance. (See the section on 'Working with Designers' for more information.)

■ **Remember your market** - Again, remember that the leaflet needs to appeal to your market and your personal tastes may differ to theirs.

■ **Don't overdo it** - One of the commonest problems with promotional literature that has not been professionally designed is the tendency to make it too 'busy' - using too many different fonts, too many colours and too much irrelevant 'clipart' - in an attempt to make the material 'eye-catching'.

There is always a place for economically produced leaflets and flyers that have been created in-house using Microsoft Word or desktop publishing software - but keep it clean, clear, and simple. Material that is too busy often ends up looking messy and unprofessional rather than eye-catching.

We recommend using only a couple of different font styles - one for the body of the text and another, heavier font for main titles and headings - and just enough colour to help pick out and emphasise your message. Avoid irrelevant clipart graphics and instead try to use decent quality photographs that are meaningful and relevant to the message of the leaflet.

Accessibility

The RNIB makes a number of recommendations for ensuring that written materials are as legible as possible. But clear design and accessibility are not just about those with impaired vision. They are useful ground rules that can help ensure that your printed materials are easy to read and pleasing to the eye. Remember the aim is to ensure that as many recipients as possible read rather than discard your literature.

"Clear design and accessibility are not just about those with impaired vision. They are useful ground rules that can help ensure that your printed materials are easy to read and pleasing to the eye"

Here are some ground rules for legibility, taken from the RNIB's See it Right pack:

- Use a minimum type size of 12pts.
- Avoid italics or elaborate fonts.
- Keep recurring features - such as page numbers - in the same place on every page.
- Avoid layering text over complex images.
- Ensure high contrast between paper colour and type colour.
- Avoid wrapping text around images.
- Use 'navigational aids' - features that make a layout easy to follow and information easy to find such as headings and illustrative images or icons.
- Create a significant margin at the top, bottom, left and right of every page.
- Insert spaces in between every paragraph in large bodies of text.
- If you're using text in columns, ensure that the gutter - margin between each column - is wide enough to clearly show division.

Creating a visually striking leaflet that is also fully accessible can be difficult and expensive - one common solution employed by many businesses is to offer plain, large text versions of their literature on request.

Using images

Good photos that support the content of your leaflet generate visual interest, and it's often the appealing or interesting image that encourages somebody to pick up a leaflet and read it.

Of course, poor quality photos can have the opposite effect. If it is possible to engage a professional photographer, then do so, but realistically this is beyond the budget of most small businesses.

An alternative is to use generic photographs

that reflect your services - for example, if you're a recycling enterprise, there are stock libraries of recycling photos online that can be purchased. There are many companies that provide this service and costs vary greatly from a few pounds to hundreds of pounds. Companies like iStockPhoto offer online libraries of images that are often very reasonably priced, however (www.istockphoto.com).

If you are supplying photographs to a design agency, it's worth noting that the size and colour requirements of photographs to be used in a print publications are different to those intended for digital use.

In light of this, it's best to supply photos as unaltered files from your digital camera or original prints - this enables the agency to enhance the images accordingly. See the section on 'Using Photographs' in Part 3 of Promoting Your Enterprise (Writing Press Releases) for more information.

Working with designers

If you have the budget, then commissioning a design agency - or a freelance designer - to produce a leaflet or brochure on behalf of your enterprise will save time and ensure that the finished product looks professional.

Design vs marketing

Before commissioning an agency, however, you should be clear about your needs.

Design agencies usually offer graphic design and print services, which means that they can create the artwork for a leaflet or brochure and then produce them (although most design agencies outsource the printing). The rest is usually up to you, although some offer additional services such as copywriting and distribution.

If you feel that you need specialist advice on other issues such as having a leaflet inserted into publications, brand development, or information about your target market then you should instead seek the services of a marketing agency.

The commissioning process

Commissioning a design agency is a straightforward process, but spending a little time ensuring you get it right will save you a lot of hassle further down the line.

Step 1 - Write a brief of what you want from an agency. Make it as detailed as you can - what size leaflet/brochure you'd like, how many copies, etc - but also indicate areas where you're prepared to be flexible or you'd like the agency to make suggestions (paper type, size, etc). Also, specify if you'll be supplying photos and text, or require the agency to provide these.

Step 2 - Gather the names and contact details of three or more design agencies. It's preferable if you can do this via recommendations from other enterprises and associates, but if not, you can refer to your local Business Link or business directory.

Step 3 - Send the brief to the agencies along with a request for:

- Costing based on your specification.
- Examples of similar work undertaken.
- Brief information about the agency.
- An indication of turnaround time.
- Their payment terms.

Unless you're looking to appoint an agency to undertake a large project, asking for speculative designs may discourage responses because it involves a lot of free work for what may be little return.

It's possible that the agencies will contact you for further information so ensure that you clearly state who they should contact in this instance.

Also, give clear deadlines indicating when they should respond by, and roughly when you'd like the leaflet or brochure produced.

Step 4 - From the responses gained, you should be able to choose a design agency that you feel best suits your enterprise. Contact them, give them the good news, and ask them what they need from you to get the ball rolling - a meeting may be required. Also, it's good practice to supply a purchase order, or at least confirm in writing, that you'd like them to produce the work specified.

The working practices of agencies vary, but at this stage the agency should outline when they can produce a first draft design for you to look at and give feedback. The leaflet/brochure will not be printed until you approve the artwork.

Don't forget to contact the unsuccessful agencies too and thank them for their time!

Getting the best results

■ **Clear communication** - Clearly explaining (or demonstrating via other leaflets and brochures) what you want, and maintaining a good communication link with the design agency throughout the production process will help to ensure your satisfaction with the final product. It will also help you to avoid incurring costs for re-design work, which may be charged if you continuously change your mind about the look, content, etc.

■ **Check everything** - An agency will do their best to ensure that everything is correct on your leaflet, but they won't spot misspelt surnames or incorrect phone numbers, event dates, etc.

Useful resources

See It Right

The RNIB has recently published a new See It Right book which aims to give organisations the tools they need to improve their policies and procedures in terms of information provision. The book can be purchased for £30 from the RNIB's website, which also contains a number of initial design guidelines free of charge.

www.rnib.org.uk

Stock Layouts

There are numerous design templates available for very little, or even for free, from online companies. The quality and reliability varies and BSSEC doesn't endorse any of the services, however templates of leaflets, brochures and other promotional items in numerous software formats such as Word and CorelDraw and can be found at

www.stocklayouts.com